Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Conference broadly endorsed the proposal for targetted Public Distribution System (PDS) especially the provision of subsidised foodgrains to the population below poverty line and recommended that the Central Government may bring in this targetted PDS into force as soon as possible.

(c) and (d) The Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor (Lakadawala Committee) suggested that use of special surveys to identify eligible households for poverty alleviation programmes cannot really give a correct picture because they may suffer from reporting bias which arises when it is known that the survey will form the basis for identifying beneficiaries of Government assistance. The Conference of Civil Supply Ministers of State Governments endorsed the poverty ratio calculated by the Lakadawala Committee methodology.

SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Sir, in 1993 the Advisory Council, in its meeting, had passed a resolution to have a national policy on the PDS to focus on the need to ensure supply of food-grains to the needy and weaker sections of the society. In the recent Chief Minister's conference also this proposal was discussed in detail, to streamline the PDS and the need to focus on the population below the poverty line. Now in the reply you have mentioned that in the conference of Civil Supplies Ministers they had endorsed a proposal and recommended to the Central Government to supply subsidised food-grains to the people below the poverty line and to enforce it quickly. I want to know whether the Government has already implemented it. Besides this, I would also like to know whether the Government has ascertained poverty ratio calculations by the Lakadawala Committee's methodology.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Sir, the Ministry of Civil Supplies is processing the recommendations of the Chief Ministers' conference and they will announce the appropriate policies accordingly. As far as the Lakadawala Committee's recommendations are concerned, they are being processed in detail by the Planning Commission. I would like to clarify that the poverty line in the Lakadawala Committee is the same as in the Planning's Commission's current estimates. But, as far as the poverty proportions are concerned, there are some aspects on which we would like some more discussions. For example, according to the Lakadawala Committee's estimates, rural poverty is less than urban poverty.

Even in States like Bihar, U.P., Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka or Kerala rural poverty is less than urban poverty. We think that some of these estimates have something to do with the methodology that the Committee has followed. If we accept them, the way they are, it may have some very serious repercussions for planning policy. So, the Planning Commission is processing the latest round of the National Sample Survey in detail, and we will come out with firm views on the subject in the Approach Paper.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Promotional Measures for Schools having Electronic Projects

*564. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the promotional measures which the Department of Electronics will take for the schools in which the Five Electronics Projects have been given under MPLADS;

(b) whether such schools would be automatically recognised by the

Department for the purpose of Computer Education;

(c) whether the Certificates of Proficiency in Computer Education given to students who have undergone training in Computers in such schools, should contain reference of the Department of Electronics who have sponsored the projects;

(d) whether the Department would supply literature in computer education and other course material to such schools; and

(e) what other steps would be taken to encourage such schools?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) Scheme, the Department of Electronics has promoted five electronics projects to create awareness about their productive applications and to promote their usage in schools/colleges etc. and in the respective ares. As mentioned in the Brochure on 'Guidelines on Implementation of Electronics Projects', the Department of Electronics provides the necessary technical assistance and guidance to facilitate implementation of these projects.

(b) No, Sir. There is no provision for recognition of schools for the purpose of computer education in the guidelines issued for implementation of electronics projects under MPLAD Scheme by, the Department of Electronics. However, under a separate scheme namely, the Department of Electronics-Accreditation of Computer Courses (DOEACC), computer training institutes in the non-formal sector (private/public) subject to meeting well defined norms and criteria, are given accreditation for conducting specified level of computer courses viz. 'O' (Foundation) 'A' (Advanced Diploma), 'B' (Graduate) and 'C' (Post-Gradute).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Literature and other relevant course material in computer education may be provided by Schools to students under the MPLAD Scheme.

(e) the proposal to revise the existing Guidelines on Implementation of Electronics Projects is under consideration of the Government of India.

ONGC and BPCL, Joint Venture for Manufacturing Xylene, Benzene, etc.

*565. SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC and BPCL are planning a joint venture company for manufacturing Xylene, Benzene, etc;

(b) whether evaluation of the project has been made keeping in view all established parameters, including indigenously available capacity;

(c) whether the proposed capacity of the plant is 275,000 tonnes which is not viable in comparison to internationally recognised capacity of 4000,000 tonnes, particularly in view of current APM price of Naphtha;

(d) whether ONGC has no expertise in this field; if so, the reasons for going in for this venture; and

(e) whether Government would consider all aspects before granting approval for the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited are conducting discussions for arriving at a Memorandum of Understanding for setting up of a Joint Venture Company to implement a grass-root paraxylene project at Hazira in Guiarat.